Ecological Imbalance in Himalayas

977. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a report appeared in the Statesman recently that the kumaon range in the Himalayas, a paradise for mountain loving people throughtout the world is facing the danger of grave Ecological imbalances as the large scale illegal felling of trees is robbing the area of its natural vegetation; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to avert this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No large scale dectruction and denudation of forests in reported in the Kumaon Range of the Himalayas. Steps taken by the Govt. to prevent degradation of forests in the area are:

(i) Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has banned green felling of trees above 1000 m. altitude in hilly and mountanious regions.

(ii) The forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was enacted to check the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.

(iii) Guidelines have also been issued to the States to involve village communities in protection of forests on usufruct basis.

(iv) The G.B. Pant Himalayan Institute for Environment and Development is engaged in research and development studies.

Ganga Action Project

978. SMT. KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ganga Action Project Phase-I has achieved its target;

(b) whether Ganga Action Project (GAP) Phase-II includes cleaning up of Yamuna and other tributaries of the Ganga;

(c) whether any Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) has been received for it; and

(d) targetted time frame for completion of GAP Phase-I and Phase-II and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Of the 261 schemes taken up in Phase-I of the Ganga Action Plan, 194 schemes have been completed. The remaining schemes are at various stages of implementation.

(b) The schemes for pollution abatement of river Yamuna and a few highly polluted tributaries of the Ganga would be considered for inclusion in the Ganga Action Plan Phase-II which is under formulation.

(c) Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, Japan has pledged a credit of Yen 17.77 billion for the Yamuna component.

(d) Most of the schemes under the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I are expected to be completed in the year 1993-94. A few schemes would extend beyond this date. Ganga Action Plan Phase-II is still under formulation.

Transition to ozone-friendly substances

979. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had recently proposed to the Indian Industry to take full advantage of the multilateral fund of

the Montreal Protocol to finance the transition to ozone-friendly substances as reported in the Hindustan Times, dated January 29, 1993 under the headline "Industry urged to avail of the Montreal Protocol Fund"; and

(b) if so, what is the response of the Indian Industry so far to proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Conference on the Montreal Protocol for the Indian Industry was held in New Delhi on January 28-29, 1993, and was attended by the representatives of several industries, industry associations and also by the representatives of concerned Ministries and Departments, Public Sector Undertakings etc. The main purpose was to familiarise the Indian industry with the details of the Montreal Protocol, and the technical and financial aspects of the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances. The participants included the representatives of the Ozone Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol. There was active participation by the representatives of industry who were present. Some representatives of industry are also associated with the Task Force set up by the Ministry of Industry to develop the national strategy on the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances.

Illegal Wildlife Trade

980. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the illegal wildlife trade going on in the inhospitable high altitude areas:

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to control it;

(c) whether Government is considering linkages with various law enforcing agencies for control of illegal trade in wildlife; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Government of India do receive from time to time information on illegal wildlife trade in different parts of the country which is followed up for punitive/preventive action by the wildlife authorities of the States.

(b) Besides the protection offered to the wildlife through a network of protected areas, banning of hunting and banning of trade in products of endangered animals, assistance is extended to State Governments to strengthen their antipoaching machinery through improved communication and better arms and ammunition. A network of Regional offices of the Director of Wildlife Preservation also keeps a watch on major points of export to prevent illegal export of wildlife produce.

(c) and (d) In difficult areas, cooperation of Army, Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police etc., is secured to prevent illegal trade in wildlife products.

Pollution Control in Delhi

981. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN:
MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the annual studies conducted by the National Environmental Engineering Institute (NEERI) and other Institutions wherein it has been revealed that Delhi is the most polluted city in India; and

(b) if so, what preventive measures are proposed to be taken to arrest the deterioration of innalable air and the